

NATIONAL
PSORIASIS
FOUNDATION

NPF

July 10, 2001

The Honorable John. D. Dingell
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Dingell,

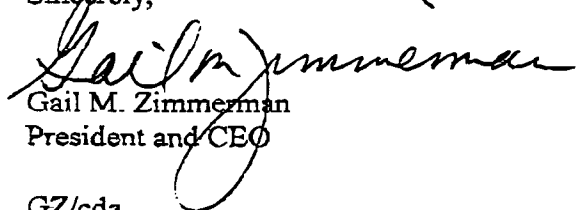
I am writing you today on behalf of the National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) in support of House Bill 526, the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001. The NPF has a particular interest in several of the issues addressed by this bill, as they stand to impact over seven million people in the U.S. who suffer with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are genetically-acquired, immune-driven diseases of the skin and joints that can be physically and emotionally disabling. One key issue for people with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis is access to specialty care. Many people with psoriasis are not allowed by their insurance company or HMO to access a dermatologist who is expert in the care of psoriasis for the correct diagnosis and treatment of their skin disease. They waste time and money on ineffective and expensive treatments, and they spend additional years of their lives suffering needlessly with their symptoms.

The NPF is also concerned that many treatments and prescription drugs successful in treating psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are withheld from the patient because they are not included on insurance company formularies. We would like people with psoriasis to have access to all available prescription drugs and treatments determined to be medically necessary by their physician. The NPF also continues to support patient access to clinical trials. There are many important new treatments in development for people with psoriasis, particularly severe psoriasis, and many of these people have never before received relief from existing treatments. Their only hope may be participation in clinical trials.

The National Psoriasis Foundation supports strong patient protections that will ensure timely access to high quality healthcare and continuity of care for those with ongoing health care needs. If there is ever any information we can provide, please do not hesitate to contact us.

On behalf of the seven million American men, women and children with psoriatic arthritis and psoriasis, thank you, Representative Dingell, for your support of healthcare access and patient protections.

Sincerely,



Gail M. Zimmerman
President and CEO

GZ/cda

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